

# **National Diabetes Education Program (NDEP)**

## **Guiding Principles for Diabetes Care: For People with Diabetes**

### **Seven Principles for controlling Your Diabetes for Life**

Each person who has diabetes has different needs. Talk to your health care provider about a treatment plan that is best for you. When you have diabetes, controlling it can help you live a long and active life.

#### **Principle 1: Find Out What Type of Diabetes You Have**

If you have diabetes, you should know what type you have. If you do not know, ask your doctor whether you have:

Type 1 diabetes. People who have this type of diabetes need to take insulin every day. This type of diabetes used to be called juvenile diabetes.

Type 2 diabetes. This type of diabetes can often be controlled by the food you eat and regular physical activity. Some people may also need to take diabetes pills or insulin. This type of diabetes used to be called adult onset diabetes.

Your doctor may use some terms that are no longer used to describe diabetes. If your doctor uses any of these, ask whether you have type 1 or type 2 diabetes.

Terms that are no longer used include:

"a touch of diabetes"

"borderline diabetes"

"sugar's a little high"

#### **Many People Who Have Diabetes Do Not Know It**

Finding and treating diabetes early can prevent health problems later on. Some people are at higher risk for diabetes than others. Risk factors for diabetes include:

Being older than 45

Being overweight

Having a close family member, like a parent, brother, or sister, who has, or had, diabetes

Having had diabetes when you were pregnant

Being African American, Hispanic/Latino, Asian American or Pacific Islander, or Native American

Find out from your doctor what type of diabetes you have.

If your doctor describes your diabetes with a term that is no longer used, ask the doctor whether you have type 1 or type 2 diabetes.

If you know someone who has any of the risk factors for diabetes, tell them to ask their doctor about getting tested for diabetes.

#### **Principle 2: Get Regular Care for Your Diabetes**

Mark the statements that you think are true. People with diabetes should:

Always receive high-quality care.

Work with health care providers to make changes to their treatment plan when needed.

See a doctor, diabetes educator, or a nutritionist on a regular basis.

Be able to get their health care needs taken care of regardless of their race, age, disability, or ability to pay.  
Get support from family, friends, and co-workers.  
Be able to get insurance and a license.  
Be treated fairly at work.  
Be able to get Medicare to help pay for diabetes supplies if they are on Medicare.

All of the statements are true.

You have the right to get the best health care to help you control your diabetes.

Ask your doctor or nurse how often you need to see them for a check-up.  
Write down the date and time for your next visit:

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Ask your doctor or clinic staff to help you find resources if you have problems paying for food, medicines, and medical supplies.  
Make a list of things you want to talk about at your next visit to the doctor or clinic.

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### **Principle 3:** **Learn How to Control Your Diabetes**

You and your family have the right to get correct information from your doctor and other health care providers to help you learn how to control your diabetes.

How Active Are You in Controlling Your Diabetes?

Look at the list below. Check all of the boxes that describe you.

I ask my doctor for accurate information about my diabetes.  
I have talked with my doctor about other people, like a nutritionist and diabetes educator, who can help me learn to control my diabetes.  
I ask the diabetes educator and nutritionist about diet and other ways to control my diabetes.  
I talk to my doctor regularly about my special needs and controlling my diabetes.

If you checked everything on the list above, you are taking an active role in learning how to control your diabetes. If you did not check everything on the list, ask your doctor about things that you should do to learn more about how to control your diabetes. Learning how to control your diabetes can help you stay healthy.

Ask your doctor about where to go to learn more about diabetes and how to control it.

### **Principle 4:** **Treat High Blood Sugar**

The number one goal of diabetes treatment is to control high blood sugar levels. There are many ways that this can be done. These include:

Eating a healthy diet  
Getting regular physical activity  
Taking medicine for your diabetes if your doctor tells you to

Testing your blood sugar

Talk to your doctor about the best ways to control your high blood sugar.  
Get involved in making a treatment plan and other decisions about your diabetes care.

**Principle 5:**  
**Monitor Your Blood Sugar Level**

Testing Your Own Blood Sugar

You may need to test your own blood sugar on a regular basis to help you control your diabetes.

Talk with your health care provider about:

What type of test to use

How to do the test the right way

How often to test

How often to report the test results

Getting the supplies you need to do the tests. If you get Medicare, it can help pay for your diabetes supplies.

Hemoglobin A1c Testing

A hemoglobin A1c test is done by your doctor. It measures how well your blood sugar has been controlled over the last 2 to 3 months. This test is very important because it tells how well you are taking care of your diabetes.

To learn more about this and other blood sugar tests, you can call 1-800-438-5383. Ask for the brochure called Know Your Blood Sugar Numbers: The ABCs of Testing for Blood Sugar Control.

Ask your doctor or nurse educator what your last hemoglobin A1c test result was. Write it below.

My last hemoglobin A1c test result was:

\_\_\_\_\_

Date of test: \_\_\_\_\_

Ask your doctor or nurse educator what your target hemoglobin A1c test result should be. Write it below.

My target hemoglobin A1c is:

\_\_\_\_\_

**Principle 6:**  
**Prevent and Diagnose Long-Term Diabetes Problems**

People with diabetes must control their blood sugar levels to prevent problems such as eye disease, kidney disease, nerve damage, heart disease, and stroke. Here are some tests that you should get on a regular basis. These include:

Blood pressure checks

Date tested \_\_\_\_\_

Results \_\_\_\_\_

Cholesterol tests

Date tested \_\_\_\_\_

Results \_\_\_\_\_

Other blood fat tests (ask your doctor what tests you should have)

Type of test \_\_\_\_\_

Date tested \_\_\_\_\_

Results \_\_\_\_\_

Remember, to help control and manage your diabetes, you should also do the following:

Eat a healthy diet

Take medicine if your doctor tells you to

Get regular physical activity

Get regular foot and eye exams

Work with your health care providers to do these things

### **Principle 7:**

#### **Get Checked for Long-Term Problems and Treat Them**

To check for problems that diabetes can cause, you should see your doctor or other health care providers on a regular basis. Doing this can prevent problems or find them early, when they can be treated and managed well.

Ask your doctor or other health care providers about how often you should have your:

Feet checked

Eyes tested

Kidneys tested

Ask your doctor or other health care providers about other tests you may also need to have:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

To take good care of your diabetes for life, be sure to follow these 7 principles:

Find Out What Type of Diabetes You Have.

Get Regular Care for Your Diabetes.

Learn How to Control Your Diabetes.

Treat High Blood Sugar.

Monitor Your Blood Sugar Level.

Prevent and Diagnose Long-Term Diabetes Problems.

Get Checked for Long-Term Problems and Treat Them.

People who have diabetes and keep their blood sugar levels under control can expect to live a long and active life.

To learn more about how to control your diabetes, call the National Diabetes Education Program at 1-800-438-5383.